

BADSHAH DARVESH GURU GOBIND SINGH

DR. KIRPAL SINGH

Dedicated to
Tercentenary Celebration of the Khalsa

April, 1999

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Badshah Darvesh Guru Gobind Singh
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Preface

My son, Rajinder Pal Singh gave me a ring sometime early in the month of March, 1999 to intimate me that he wanted to publish some material for free circulation on the occasion of Tercentenary Celebration of Khalsa. It was a pleasant surprise for me. I told him that printing and paper both were very costly and it was not a child's play to publish literature and distribute it free. But he appeared determined in his resolve. He pleaded, "We spend so much on ourselves and on our children, why can't we spend for the sake of the Guru". His reply confirmed his determination and faith which was satisfying both for me and his mother. Thus began the work on this book.

This is a humble tribute of faith on behalf of Rajinder Pal Singh to the great Guru who sacrificed his all, so that humanity may live peacefully.

My thanks are due to Prof. Prithipal Singh Kapoor, Prof of Encyclopaedia, Punjabi University, Patiala for giving some useful suggestions and S. Sukhwant Singh Manchanda for giving guidance and help in its publication.

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Guru Gobind Singh - Early Days

The early life of Guru Gobind Singh is very significant as it gives the clues of his genius. Teja Singh has rightly pointed out that “his childhood reflects his in born greatness.”¹ When he was only some months old he manifested his love for all mankind by putting his hands on two pots symbolising the Hindu and Muslims which had been brought by Bhikham Shah, a Muslim saint. Bhikham Shah belonged to village Siana near Kaithal (Haryana) and according to Bhai Khan Singh, he went to Patna to test whether the child Guru would favour Hindus or Muslims.²

Gobind Das or Gobind Rai as the Guru was called as child was fortunate to have the mature guidance of his maternal uncle, Kirpal Chand. Kirpal Chand was son of Lal Chand Subhikhu Khatri of Lakhnaur District Ambala (Haryana). He was the real brother of Mata Gujri, wife of Guru Teg Bahadur the ninth Sikh Guru. He had started his career as a soldier in the army of Guru Har Rai. He had always been in contact with his brother-in-law and protected him when he was attacked by Shian Masand, at Baba Bakala (District Amritsar)³. He accompanied Guru Teg Bahadur when he proceeded towards Patna as treasurer and camp organiser. In the Guru's absence at Patna, he was with the family and looked after the child Guru, guided and protected him from the external hazards.

There has been no doubt that the Guru was born at Patna, capital of Bihar as the Guru himself has stated in the *Bachitar Natak*:

My father went East
He visited many places of pilgrimage
Where my father came to Treveni
He devoted himself to boundless charities
After getting manifestation
I took my birth at Patna city.⁴

1. *Guru Gobind Singh Birthday Souvenir*, Patna 1961, p.63.

2. Bhai Khan Singh, *Mahan Kosh*.

3. *Encyclopaedia of Sikhism*, Harbans Singh Vol. II, Patiala, p.512

4. *Bachitar Natak, Dasam Granth*, Vol. I, Punjabi University, Patiala, p. 76.

Patna gained importance as the capital of Bihar during the days of Akbar, the Mughal Emperor. The development of the town of Patna synchronised with the rise of Sikhism. Patna has been mentioned as one of the centres of Sikhism by Bhai Gurdas during the 17th century.

There is no doubt that when Guru Gobind Singh was born his father had gone on the preaching tour towards Assam. It is evident from the various Hukamnamas (letters) of the Guru Teg Bahadur, preserved at Patna. In one of the letters, he wrote, "I have left my family at Patna".⁵ In another letter he wrote "Congregation has spent money on the birth of Gobind Dass".⁶ The letter Hukamnamah is not dated.

Date of birth controversy

The traditional and accepted date of birth of Guru Gobind Singh is Saturday, Poh Shudi 7, 1723 B.K. viz. December 22, 1666 A.D. This date has been recorded by Bhai Sukha Singh in his *Gurbilas* (Language Department, 1989) vide page 34. *Gurbilas* Kaur Singh also recorded this date to be the birth date of the Tenth Guru. All authorities agree that the Guru was born on Poh Shudi 7. Bhai Kahn Singh in his *Mahakosh* has recorded this date but some writers have stated that the Guru was born on Poh Shudi 7 Sambat 1718 B.K. viz. December 18, 1661 A.D. One of the protagonists of this date is Gulab Singh of Nirmala order who has recorded this date in his *Gurparnali* (Vide *Gurparnali*, Gulab Singh, in *Gurparnalian* – Randhir Singh, page 199) *Bansawali* Namah Kesar Singh Chibber (Singh Brothers, Amritsar, p.125) also gives this date. If we accept the former date viz. 1666 A.D. then Guru Gobind Singh's age at the time of martyrdom of his father was nine years. If we accept later date viz. 1661 A.D. then the age of Guru Gobind Singh at the time of his father's martyrdom was fourteen years. Several English authors like J.D. Cunningham and Mohammad Latif have stated that Guru Gobind Singh at the time of his father's martyrdom was of fifteen years of age. The other writers have followed them without formally committing themselves to the date of birth of Guru Gobind Singh.

5. See my "Patna Collection of Hukamnamahs" in the book "*Guru Gobind Singh – the Saviour*, New Delhi, 1969, p.88

6. Ibid., p. 89-90.

When the Sikh history research started S. Karm Singh who was considered a pioneer of Sikh history research, wrote one monograph *Gurpurb Nirnay* which was published in Patiala in 1912 A.D. He has stated there is that two dates of birth of Guru Gobind Singh had been prevalent but more acceptable date is of 1666 A.D. which he has recorded in his book *Gurpurb Nirnay* (vide page 172).

The discovery of *Bhatt Vahis* by Giani Garja Singh has brought all those dates which were connected with Sikh Gurus and recorded by various Bhattas. *Guru Kian Sakhian* by Sarup Singh Koshish (1790 A.D.) has also been published. It gives Guru Gobind's date of birth corresponding to 1661 A.D. Based on *Bhatt Vahis* a new book entitled "*Correct Date of Birth of Sri Guru Gobind Singh*" has been brought out by G.B. Singh and D.R. Narang. The authors have argued at length that the correct date of birth of Guru Gobind Singh was December 18, 1661 A.D. Their main argument is that *Panda Vahis* and *Bhatt Vahis* give in detail of travels of Guru Tegh Bahadur. According to this date, Guru Tegh Bahadur visited Patna twice - 1661 A.D. and 1666 A.D. The supporting dates of Guru Tegh Bahadur's visit to Allahabad and Banaras have been discovered from *Panda Vahis* - Thus from this angle they prove that the date of 1661 A.D. as year of birth of Guru is more probable.

With march of times, a new problem has risen. The Sikhs who has been dispersed throughout the world want SGPC Amritsar to fix some date as birth day of the Tenth Master - just as Christ birthday has been fixed to be 25th December which could be celebrated all over the world. Accordingly SGPC is preparing Khalsa Calendar which has fixed 5th January as the birth date of Tenth Master's. Pal Singh Purewal from Canada is persuading SGPC to adopt the new calendar leaving the Bikrami one which has outlived its utility. He has prepared Khalsa Jantri which is being published by SGPC Amritsar. According to this Jantri, 5th January has been fixed as Guru Gobind Singh's birthday.

Stay At Patna

Guru Gobind Singh stayed at Patna has been commemorated by a number of Gurdwaras associated with the anecdotes of his childhood. *Gurdwara Maini Sangat* is just near Takhat Harminder Sahib which commemorates the birth place of the Guru. Fateh Chand

Maini was a devout Sikh of Guru Tegh Bahadur and he used to serve the child Guru with *Puris* and cooked grams when the child Guru used to visit his house while playing with other children.⁷ Uptil this day, they served cooked gram as *prasad*.

A new Gurdwara has been erected on the bank of the river Ganges where the child Guru used to bathe and lost his two golden bangles. The Gurdwara is known as Kangan Sahib.

From his earliest years, Gobind Rai was accustomed to practice shooting with pellet-bow and organise a company of boys of his own age to practise with him.⁸

Stay At Lakhnaur

On return from Assam, Guru Tegh Bahadur met his family at Patna, remained there for sometime. Subsequently he left for Punjab instructing the family to follow him. Guru Tegh Bahadur's mother Nanaki, Gobind Rai and his mother Gujri, her brother Kirpal Chand with other Sikhs set out for Punjab. The first place where he stayed on his route was Chhota Mirzapur near Benaras. After spending some days he proceeded to Ayodhya and from Ayodhya (Allahabad) he went to Lucknow and reached Lakhnaur.⁹

Lakhnaur is at a distance of four miles from Ambala Cantt. had been the native place of Lal Chand, the father of Mata Gujri, wife of Guru Tegh Bahadur. There the Gobind Rai stayed about six months'.¹⁰ It is therefore important to mention that historical importance of the town and details of Guru's stay there. When Gobind Rai reached Lakhnaur, Guru Tegh Bahadur sent a message that the family should stay at Lakhnaur until he called him to Anandpur. Here, the Guru's family stayed with Jetha Masand. Bhatt Vahi, Taluda Pargana Jind has stated:-

"1727 Bikrami Asarh Shudi 9, 13th September 1670 A.D. Gobind Rai visited the house of Mehar Chand (the elder brother of Kirpal Chand) Subhikhi Khatri. Mehar Chand performed *Sarwana* on the Dussehra day.¹¹ It implies that the family reached Lakhnaur

7. Bhai Khan Singh's Mahakosh.

8. M.A. Macauliffe, *Sikh Religion*, Vol. IV, Delhi, 1963, p. 360-61.

9. M.A. Macauliffe, *Sikh Religion*, Cit. Op., p.360-61.

10. My book *Sikh Itihas De Vishesh Pakh*, Amritsar 1995, p.194.

11. *Ibid.*, p.196

in 1670 A.D. At Lakhnaur, Gobind Rai engaged himself in various types of military exercises of horse-riding, use of weapons as the Sikhs of this area presented him horses and weapons. Here again Shah Bhikhan who had gone to Patna and has already been mentioned, once again came to see the child Gobind Rai. One more Pir Arif also came to see him at Lakhnaur.¹²

Since Guru stayed at Lakhnaur for a number of months he visited the following adjoining areas where historic Gurdwaras have been built to commemorate his visit. All these Gurdwaras have been recorded by Pandit Tara Narotam during the 19th century.

1. Rana Majra : about 15 miles north of Lakhnaur
2. Sular Gram : about 10 miles north of Lakhnaur
3. Mardogram : Four miles from Lakhnaur

Besides these places Gobind Rai visited Ambala City, Bhano Kheri.¹³

When Gobind Rai received message from Guru Tegh Bahadur he proceeded to Anandpur along with other members of the family. According to *Bhatt Vahi* quoted above Gobind Rai lived with his father at Anandpur for about five years.

Stay at Anandpur - upto 1675 A.D.

According to *Bhatt Vahi Taluda*, Gobind Rai appears to have stayed at Anandpur about five years as in the year 1671 A.D. he visited his maternal uncle's house at Lakhnaur as already been mentioned.¹⁴ These five years were crucial in the history of India. Aurangzeb, the Mughal Emperor had reimposed *Jazya* and in 1669 A.D. he "ordered to demolish all the schools and temples of infidels and to put down their religious teachings and practices".¹⁵ His policy was to convert Hindus *en mass*. This policy was more vigorously pursued in Kashmir. So the Kashmir Brahmins under the leadership of Kirpa Ram who was the direct descendant of Mai Dass who had

12. *Ibid.*, p. 197-98.

13. *Ibid.*, pp.199-200.

14. My book entitled "*Sikh Itihas De Vishesh Pakh*" cit. op., p. 196.

15. Ishwari Prasad, *A Short History of Muslim Rule in India*, Allahabad, 1965, p.607.

a lengthy discourse with Guru Nanak (vide Sakhi No.49 – *Puratan Janamsakhi* – reached Guru Tegh Bahadur for help.¹⁶ The Guru became serious, began to reflect over this problem. When young Gobind Rai found his father in reflective mood asked the cause of his seriousness. The Guru taking compassion on dear son seated him near him and told him the problem of Kashmiri pandits. According to *Kaur Singh's Gurbilas*, Guru Tegh Bahadur told young Gobind Rai that one brave and noble man was needed to make the supreme sacrifice to alleviate the sufferings. Gobind Rai innocently uttered “for that purpose who is more worthy than you”.¹⁷ The Guru felt encouraged from his young son's reply and prepared himself to make the supreme sacrifice. Subsequently, Guru Gobind Singh has mentioned this sacrifice in the *Bachitar Natak*.¹⁸ “Guru Tegh Bahadur sacrificed his life for the tilak - sacred thread of the Hindus”. In this way, Guru Gobind Singh's early life is not only significant but eventful also.

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16. *Guru Kian Sakhian*, Sarup Singh Kaushik, ed. Piara Singh Padam, Patiala, 1986, p.72
 17. *Guru Bilas Padahahidas*, Kaur Singh, Patiala 1968, p.49
 18. *Encyclopaedia of Sikhism*, Vol. II, ed. Harbans Singh, Patiala, 1996, p.88.

Creation of the Khalsa

“Guru Gobind Singh”, writes Cunningham “effectively aroused the dormant energies of a vanquished people and filled them with a lofty longing for social freedom and national ascendancy. He saw what was yet vital and he relumed it with Promethean fire. A living spirit possesses the whole Sikh people, and the impress of Gobind has not only elevated and altered the constitution of their minds but has operated materially and given amplitude to their physical frame” *History of Sikhs* p. 84, Guru Gobind Singh brought about this miracle on Baisakhi day (March 29, 1699 A.D.) which can rightly be considered a red letter day in the history of the Sikhs. It was on this day that the Guru invited Sikhs from far off places and there was a huge gathering on the fortress of Kesgarh at Anandpur, the abode of bliss. The Guru called forth the persons who could sacrifice their lives for the sacred course of religion. He was standing on the raised platform with a naked sword in his hand. Great terror was struck and the weak and the coward left the place. Some Sikhs went to the Guru’s mother and complained that the Guru had lost his balance off mind and had resolved to murder his Sikhs.

This was not peculiar. The great men in every age and in every clime have been greatly misunderstood. The commoners generally do not understand the significance of the underlying deeds of the great seers. Guru Nanak was also called misguided and just like him Guru Gobind was grossly misinterpreted by his contemporaries.

The Guru’s call did not remain unresponded. There came forth five men who offered themselves one by one for great sacrifice. The Guru took them one by one in the nearby tent and came with his sword dripping with blood.

The Guru chose his five beloveds who belonged to different places and different castes. Daya Ram was a khatri of Lahore (now in Pakistan), Dharam Das, a Jat of Hastinapur near Delhi, Mohkam Chand, a washerman of Dwarka (Gujarat), Himmat (water carrier) of Jagan Nath Puri (Orissa) and Sahib Chand barber, was of Bidar (Maharashtra). The Guru administered them *Pahul* which he himself

prepared while reciting scared hymns and moving double edged sword (Small Size) in it and they formed the nucleus of the Order of Khalsa. They were given the surname of Singh, meaning Lion. After administering *Pahul* to the five beloved, the Guru asked them to give him *Pahul* in the same way.

Code of Conduct

After creating the Khalsa, Guru declared the code of conduct: The Khalsa was asked to ever wear five emblems : Kes (long hair), and beard, Kanga (a comb,) Kara (steel bracelet), Kachha, (a short breeches) and Kirpan, (a sword.) According to the oldest accounts available, Guru gave the following sermon to the Khalsa.

“I wish you all to embrace one creed and follow one path, obliterating all differences of religion. Let the four Hindu castes, who have different rules laid down for them in the Shastras, abandon them altogether and, adopting the way of cooperation, mix freely with one another. Let no one deem superior to another. Do not follow the old scriptures. Let none pay heed to the Ganges and other places of pilgrimage which are considered holy in the Hindu religion or adore Hindu deities such as Rama, Krishna, Brahma and Durga but all should believe in Guru Nanak and his successors. Let men of four castes receive my baptism, eat out of same vessel and feel no disgust or contempt for one another. (Macauliffe, Sikh Religion Vol. V page 93.)

The Guru's appeal had tremendous effect and within a short time a large number of Sikhs received *Pahul*.

The Guru's creation of the Khalsa had very far reaching effects. It elevated the low caste who were the dregs of the society. The Guru brought them at par with the rest and inspired them with self-confidence. His new slogan was “Khalsa is of the Guru and victory belongs to the Guru”. When various tribes of the Punjab embraced Sikhism and took *Pahul*. The tribal animosities and intercaste warfare came to an end. Politically, Guru created the greatest force in the land of five rivers. Ever since the creation of Khalsa, the history of the Punjab has been the history of the Khalsa.

* * *

Khalsa - A Fulfilment of Guru Nanak's Mission

The earliest reference to the Sikh Gurus in the contemporary Persian works is in *Dabistan* whose author was popularly known as Mohsin fani. He had been in contact with the sixth Guru, Guru Hargobind Singh (1605-1644 A.D.). It has been stated in the *Debistan* that the Sikhs call their Guru 'Mohalla'. This word is from the Persian word *Halool* which according to Steingass *Persian-English Dictionary* means entering, penetrating, transmigrating. *Mohalla* means "soul penetrated". It has been stated there that the Sikhs used *Mohalla* for every Guru which means a previous Guru's spirit had penetrated into the living Guru. It implies that the same spirit was working in all the Gurus. It is states also in *Adi Granth*, "*Jot Oha Jugat Sai*". If the same spirit was working in the Gurus, the mission cannot be different. In this way the mission of Guru Gobind Singh cannot be at variance with the mission of Guru Nanak. The work initiated by Guru Nanak was completed by Guru Gobind Singh.

How Khalsa was the fulfilment of Guru Nanak's mission can be studied from different points of view. From the point of view of Sikh doctrine, it was in conformity with the basic tenets of Sikhism as is clear from the following :

1. Guru Nanak was deadly against caste system. He lived with a Muslim named Mardana for a number of years. In order to free the society from the curse of caste system, he introduced the system of common kitchen - *Langar*. Following the same principle, Guru Gobind Singh created Khalsa after amalgamating low castes with high castes. His selection of Panj Piaras 'five beloved' was from Khatri, Jats, Washermen and other low castes. All were given *Pahul* from the same bowl demolishing of the barriers of the caste.
2. Guru Nanak had identified himself with the lowly. He lived with the carpenter - Bhai Lalo, Boatsman - Majnu; petty accountant - Adraka. He had stated :

“Nanak seeks the company of those who are lowest of the lowly. Why should he rival the lofty. Where the poor are looked after, there does rain the Grace of God.”

Following the same principle, Guru Gobind Singh elevated the lowly in creation of Khalsa. In the words of Rattan Singh Bhango, the author of *Prachin Panth Parkash* Guru Gobind Singh promised those poor Sikhs sovereignty :

Garib Singhanko Devon Patshahi, Yaad Karein Hamri Guryayee

(Prachin Panth Parkash, p. 27)

3. Guru Nanak had transformed his spiritual self into Guru Angad, his disciple. Similarly, Guru Gobind Singh transformed his personality into Khalsa after taking *Pahul from Khalsa*. The tradition of ‘*Aape Gur Chela*’ started by Guru Nanak was continued.

4. During the dialogue with the Siddhas, as narrated in *Siddh Gosht* - long verse of Guru Nanak, Guru Nanak has told the Siddhas that his Guru was *Shabad*. So Guru Nanak had established the *Shabad* to be the Guru. Guru Gobind Singh too declared that after him the embodiment of *shabad* viz. the *Adi¹ Guru Granth* would be the Guru of the Sikhs.

From historical point of view, Guru Gobind Singh fulfilled the mission of Guru Nanak by creating Khalsa and freeing the land which had been victim of repeatedly foreign invasions and was known by different names.

The tract of territory now comprising Punjab India and Punjab Pakistan, were known by different names down the centuries - *Sapta Sandhu¹* of the Rig Veda, *Hafta Hindu* of Zand Avesta. *Panchnada* of Mahabhart and *Agni Purva²* has been the victim of foreign invasion since time immemorial. Long before Alexander’s invasion in 325 BC this tract of territory was conquered by Darius I (522-485 BC) of Iran. *Hafta Hindu* has been included in the list of his conquered

1. Rig Veda, T.H. Griffiths, Vol. II.

2. Hobson Jobson, Henry, Yule, Delhi, 1903, p. 741.

territory in the Roek Inscription fixed on his tomb³. After Alexander's invasion there have been numerous invasions of Ghazniwide dynasty. Alpatgin frequently employed his armies under *General Sabukatgin* for the reduction of the province of Multan and Lamghan (area near Gazni), and thousands of inhabitants of these provinces were carried away as slaves to Ghazni. Jaipal, the Raja of Lahore finding his troops unable to withstand the armies of northern invaders formed an alliance with the Raja of Bhatia (Bhatner) but the confederate armies failed to prevent the assailants from carrying away great spoils from India each time they attacked the country⁴.

During the invasions of Mahmud of Ghazni from (1001-1027 AD) a large number of men lost their lives. Women were captured and taken away with huge wealth which he could plunder from various quarters⁵.

After Mahmud, his son Mahsud again conquered Lahore in 1036 AD⁶. In the history of India, Timurlane's invasion in 1399 AD brought more destruction and misery. Writing about the city of Bhatner, Latif writes, "but a few of them escaped the sword of Timur's troops who attacked them and slew many thousands. Timur in person pressed the army so hard that he drove them back and captured the city gates. The enemy was hunted from street to street⁷.

Guru Nanak's Lamentation of foreign Invasions

Guru Nanak (1469-1539 AD) the founder of Sikhism greatly lamented the invasion of Zahiruddin Babar the Mughal Emperor and founder of the Mughal empire in India. How people suffered on account of Babar's invasion has been fully described by Guru Nanak in his verses preserved in the *Adi Granth* the Sikh scripture :

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3. Vedic India, Z.A. Ragozin, London, 1895, p. 107.
 4. History of Panjab, Mohammad Latif, New Delhi, 1964, p. 77.
 5. Ibid., p. 84-86.
 6. Ibid., p. 87.
 7. Ibid., p. 114.

"Babar with the wedding party of sin from Kabul invaded down
 And forcibly demanded surrender of Indian womanhood Then
 went modesty and righteousness into hiding.
 And falsehood was strutting about in glory
 Set aside were Qazis and Brahmins.
 Satan went about solemnizing marriages.
 Muslim women reciting the Quran
 In their affliction called on Khuda.
 Other women of low caste and of Hindus
 In their suffering may also be put in the same account⁸."

At another place, Guru Nanak laments :

"Dishonoured were women of Hindus,
 Muslims, Bhattis and Thakurs
 Of some were the gowns torn from head to foot
 Some in Cremation yards found resting places⁹.
 They who wore beautiful tresses and parting
 Of whose hair dyed with vermillion,
 Have their locks now shorn with scissors
 And dust is thrown upon their heads.
 They dwelled in their private chambers.
 Now they cannot find a seat in public."¹⁰

How powerful is Guru Nanak's expression addressed to God :

"So intense is our suffering. O Lord and Thou feelest no pain?
 O Creator Thou belongest to all.
 If powerful duel with powerful I grieve not,
 But if a ravenous lion falls upon a flock of sheep then the Master
 must answer".¹¹

8. The Adi Guru Granth, p. 722.

9. Ibid., p. 418.

10. Ibid., p. 417.

11. The Adi Guru Granth, p. 360.

Khalsa : A Fulfilment of Guru Nanak's Mission

The cry of Guru Nanak against the injustice and tyranny at the time of Babar's invasion was heard by God who subsequently in due course of time ordained Guru Gobind Singh to create Khalsa in fulfilment of Guru Nanak's mission. In creating Khalsa not only the principle objectives of Guru Nanak were achieved but his teachings and tenets were also followed. G.C. Narang has rightly stated, "The seed which blossomed in the time of Guru Gobind Singh had been sown by Guru Nanak and watered by his successors. The sword which earned the Khalsa's way to glory was undoubtedly forged by Gobind out the steel had been provided by Nanak."¹²

How Khalsa fulfilled the mission of rolling back the tide of foreign invasions, can be gleaned from various events recorded in history.

Sikhs Oppose Abdali Invasions

After the third battle of Panipat Ahmad Shah Abdali devoted the rest of his invasions to subdue the Sikhs. In 1762 in one of his actions more than twenty thousand Sikhs were killed and the event is still known as Ghallu Ghara¹³ in the annals of Sikh. Their sacred temple of Darbar Sahib Amritsar was pulled down. But the Sikhs continued their struggle against foreign aggressors. With the tactics of guerilla warfare, they exhausted the invader. At last Ahmad Shah Abdali founder of the Afghan Empire who had destroyed the Mughal rule and had crushed the Marathas was himself defeated at the hands of valiant Khalsa bands.

The Last Afghan Invasion

Zaman Shah, the grandson of Ahmad Shah Abdali was the last to invade India in 1799 AD. As has been reported by *Umda-tut Twarikh*, he was challenged by Ranjit Singh, young leader of Sukarchaki Misal when Zaman Shah was in Lahore fort. He could not stay for long. Soon after he retired to Afghanistan.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1799-1839 AD) so decisively defeated the Afghan *Jehadis* in the battle of Naushera in 1823, the battle of

12. Transformation of Sikhism, G.C. Narang, Delhi, 1989, p. 1.

13. Rattan Singh Bhangos, Prachin Panth Parkash, pp. 215-18.

Saido 1827 AD and Battle of Balakot in 1831 AD that they got bewildered. They had never seen defeat at the hands of Indian forces for many centuries and contemptuously called Indians, including Indian Muslims, *Hindko* and considered Sikhs infidels. But now after number of defeats at the hands of Khalsa they began to say, "Khalsa Ham Khuda Shuda" (Khalsa too belong to God).

In this way Khalsa fulfilled the mission of Guru Nanak and freed the country from the fear of invasions from the north west frontier.

Dr. Hari Ram Gupta has rightly stated, "Sikhs alone can boast of having erected a bulwork of defence against foreign aggression, the tide of which had run its prosperous for eight hundred years and to whom all people of Northern India in general & people of the Punjab in particular owe a deep debt of gratitude."

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The Last Phase

The Last Phase of Guru Gobind Singh's life can be divided into three parts:-

1. Writing of Zafar Namah to Aurangzeb, the Mughal Emperor.
2. Guru Gobind Singh's relations with Bahadur Shah.
3. Guru Gobind Singh's Martyrdom.

After the battles of Chamkaur (in the Ropar District) Khidrana (in the Ferozepur District) and his stay at Damdama Sahib (in the Bhatinda District), Guru Gobind Singh visited the place which now goes by the name of Dyal Pura (near Dina). In those days this territory belonged to Kangarh, a small Estate which has been mentioned by the Guru himself in his Zafar Namah:-

You are invited to visit village Kangarh and mutual talk would take place there.

The place where Guru wrote this letter a Gurdwara has been erected called Zafar Namah Sahib. It is very interesting and instructive to know that the Guru named this letter as "Epistle of Victory". Indeed it indicated victory of virtue over the forces of evil. In the wordly sense, the Guru was defeated but his spirit and the spirit of his Khalsa were never lowered. It was on this account that the Guru named this letter as Epistle of Victory. This letter indicates that the Guru appears to have written this letter in reply to the Emperor's letter, Dr. G.C. Narang writes that Guru Gobind Singh "received a letter from Aurangzeb requiring his presence at Delhi. He replied in long Epistle couched in spirited, Persian verse stating all the wrongs that had been done to him and justifying his recourse to sword as ultimate remedy. It seems that Aurangzeb in his letter to the Guru had sworn by the Quran to treat him honourably but the Guru tells him plainly in his reply that he does not care a rap for the wily Mughal's oaths. "In the *Zafar Namah* the Guru complains of wantonly broken pledges and arouses Aurangzeb's sense of justice and religious integrity. What could semi-starved forty person do

when they were attacked by thousands of well equipped soldiers." He admonishes Aurangzeb that a religious man should recognise God in every body but at the same time the Guru warned, "If you look at your military prowess and riches, God would be my shelter." Bhai Daya Singh was deputed to deliver *Zafar Namah* to Aurangzeb. He found some difficulties in contacting the Emperor. So a Hukam Namah was issued by the Guru to the local Sangat to help Bhai Daya Singh.

What was the exact effect of *Zaffar Namah*- it cannot be assessed. Some writers are of the view that after reading the Emperor sent two mace bearers to invite the Guru to the Deccan. J.D. Commingham writes "messengers arrived to summon him to the Emperor's presence." Soon after we find that the Guru set out for the Deccan. He took his southern journey through Rajputana and had reached a place named Baghour when he heard the news of Aurangzeb's death in 1707. Immediately, the Guru retraced his steps towards Delhi.

Relations with Bahadurshah:-

Prince Mauzam to whom the title of Shah Alam was granted by his father Aurangzeb ascended the throne with the name of Bahadur Shah. In the war of succession which followed the death of Aurangzeb Prince Muazam was successful. His relations with the Guru can be divided into two phases:

1. As a Prince.
2. As a Emperor.

According to Bhai Sukha Singh author of *Gurbilas Padshahi Das*, Prince Muazam was brought near to Guru Gobind Singh by his well known court poet Bhai Nand Lal who was very close to the Prince. The Prince was appointed Governor of Multan in 1696 AD and subsequently appointed Governor of Kabul and Lahore in 1698 AD. When he heard that there were disturbances in the Punjab Hill States, he led a punitive expedition. The Prince did not molest the Guru but on the other hand looted and punished those who had deserted the Guru, seems to suggest that some sort of understanding was arrived at between the Prince and the Guru. This policy was

quite consistent with the career of Prince Muazam. Sir J. N. Sarkar has stated "Aurangzeb, constant fear was lest his son should send aid to Qutab Shah and enable him to escape from the beleaguered fort". King Abdul Hassan of Gol Kanda sent his agent secretly to the Prince with costly presents requesting him to intervene and save him from imperial wrath.

Since no Mughal Prince was sure about the succession and sword was the only arbitrator, all the princes tried their best to consolidate their individual influences. As Keer Singh the author of *Gurbilas* has clearly pointed out Prince Muazam's understanding with the Guru was a subtle move to counteract Prince Azam's power in the Deccan.

Later on when Aurangzeb died Prince Muazam marched towards Agra and according to Irvine "Guru Gobind Singh met Bahadur Shah at some point when the Prince was on his march down country from Lahore to Agra to contest the throne with his brother Azam Shah" Again Bhai Nand Lal persuaded the Prince to seek the blessings of the Guru in the war of succession.

According to Khafi Khan Guru Gobind Singh at that time had "two or three hundred horsemen and lancers and some footmen". the Guru sent some of the Sikhs to fight for the Prince in the battle of Jajo. Ultimately the Prince was victorious and ascended the throne.

Both Persian and Gurmukhi sources corroborate the fact that the Prince after his victory conferred costly gifts on the Guru. The Prince met the Guru at the Agra Fort and presented him a "jewelled scarf" This fact is supported by Senapat, Khafi Khan and other writers.

Some writers however entirely misunderstood the relations of Guru Gobind Singh with Bahadur Shah when they stated that the Guru joined service of the Mughal Emperor. Perhaps they have taken the cue from Khafi Khan. Khafi Khan writes that the Guru accompanied the Emperor to the Deccan, this does not mean that the Guru joined his service. The exact word used by Khafi is

"*Rafaqat*" which according to Steingass Persian English Dictionary means "follow traveller" or being 'companion'. The way the Guru was moving toward the Deccan makes this point very clear. The author of *Tarikh-i-Bhadur Shahi* writes, "At the time the army was marching southwards towards Burhanpur, Guru Gobind, one of the grandsons of Nanak, had come into those districts to travel and accompanied the royal camp. He was in habit of constantly addressing assemblies of worldly persons, religious fanatics and all sorts of people."

While marching towards south, Guru Gobind Singh liked the place known as Nander on the bank of river Godawari. He began to live there. Here he met one Madho Das Bairagi who was greatly impressed by the magnificent personality of the Guru. He submitted to the Guru calling himself his Slave Banda. He was given *Pahul* by the Guru and was made leader of the Sikhs and sent towards Punjab. The Guru gave him *Hukamnamas* addressed to the Sikhs of Majha, Doaba and Malwa instructing them to join Banda Singh. Soon after the Guru breathed his last, Banda Singh came to know about the Guru's demise when he was near Delhi.

Martyrdom :-

Guru Gobind Singh's martyrdom has been narrated by different writers in a different way but the earliest accounts of Guru's martyrdom makes it clear that the Guru was attacked by an unknown Pathan. Senapati in *Sri Gur Soba* states:-

"One Pathan came near the Guru and talked to him sweetly for two or three hours to get his chance but he could not get it because of the numerous persons. He went to his home and again came after two or three days and kept waiting for three or four hours and again he went away without getting the chance."

"Similarly he came for so many times but without success. Now he studied the situation and selected the evening time for his

objective. One evening he called upon the Guru who called him in and gave him *parsad* (food which had been blessed) which that unholy person put in his mouth. There was no sikh near by at that time except one who was dozing and the Guru himself was lying down to rest. The sinner attacked, the Guru flashed his sword and with one stroke killed him and did not allow him to go out.”

The author of *Tarikh-i-Bahadur Shahi* states:-

One day an afghan who frequently attended these meetings was listening to him when certain expression unfit for the ears of the faithful, fell from the tongue of the Guru. The Afghan was enraged and regardless of the Guru's dignity and importance gave him two or three stabs with a knife and killed him.” Khafī Khan particularly noted that the murderer could not be traced. He states,—“During those days then Bahadur Shah had set out on his march toward Deccan a person named Gobind one of the leaders of that notorious sect, came to his presence and accompanied him with two or three hundred horsemen, lancers and footmen. Two or three months later he died accidentally from a wound of dagger and the murderer remained unknown.”

It may be noted that it was Vazir Khan who compelled Guru Gobind Singh to leave Anandpur. Again it was he who besieged the Guru at Chamkour and ultimately forced him to leave. Guru Gobind Singh's two younger sons were killed by the orders of Vazir Khan. But the situation changed dramatically after the death of Aurangzeb. Bahadur Shah, son of Aurangzeb won his war of succession in the battle of Jajo with the help of the Guru. He, therefore, was on friendly terms with the Guru and held the Guru in high esteem. Consequently Bahadur Shah honoured the Guru by presenting him scarft worth Rs. 60,000 (Senapatis *Gur Soba* - Guru's hukamnamah to the Sangat of Dhaul) Cordial relations between the Bahadur Shah and the Guru could not be naturally relished by Vazir Khan, Governor of Sirhind. Vazir Khan saw his own ruin in this new development. Moreover contemporary evidence proves that the Pathan who attacked the Guru was not an unknown person and that he was in search of opportunity

to put an end to the Guru's life. Thus circumstantial evidence goes to prove that Vazir Khan appears to have hand in the martyrdom of the Guru. Subsequently it revealed that guru's murderer's son was given robe of honour by Bahadur Shah which proved that the Emperor was playing double game with the Guru.

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The Precepts

The variegated image of Guru Gobind Singh is found in the history of Khalsa. It has been said that he was a "law giver in the pulpit, a champion in the field, a king on his *masnad* and a *faqir* in the assembly of Khalsa". These versatile qualities of the great Guru have been reflected in the various activities of Khalsa. The Guru instituted several orders which continued working. Their achievements signify the great farsightedness of their founder. Following are some of the missionary orders created by him.

Nirmalas

Before Guru Gobind Singh, knowledge had been the privilege of the upper classes especially Brahmins who considered the low caste unworthy of the sacred knowledge contained in the holy books. Consequently, only Brahmins could study Sanskrit. The Guru wanted to break these barriers and make common man's soul enlightened with knowledge

ਬੁਧ ਕੇ ਦੀਪਕ ਜਿਓ ਉਜੀਆਰੇ

It has been stated that in 1686 A.D. one Sanskrit scholar named Pandit Raghunath met the Guru at Paonta Sahib. The Guru wanted him to open a Sanskrit school for teaching the Sikhs. The scholar was very particular about the castes of his pupils. When he came to know that the Sikhs who wanted to learn Sanskrit were not Brahmins and belonged to lower castes - he refused to teach them. Then the Guru commissioned five Sikhs to have regular training in the Sanskrit lore and sent them to Benaras. On their return, these five Sikhs formed nucleus of what subsequently came to be known as Nirmalas. When the Guru organised Khalsa - these dedicated scholars joined the Khalsa Order after taking *Pahul* (baptism).

The Nirmala Order kept the traditions of Sanskrit learning among the Sikhs. This missionary order served the cause of spreading Sikhism in every nook and corner of India. They followed threefold programme:

1. To administer *Pahul* (baptism) to the Sikhs.
2. To expound the text of the *Adi Guru Granth*, the sacred scripture of the Sikhs.
3. To write books - commentary and exposition of the Guru's works.

The members of this scholarly order continued their work silently even during the darkest period of Sikh history. They kept the flag of

learning high as instructed by the Guru even though they were being persecuted and facing great difficulties. Among them there had been very eminent scholars who wrote a number of books. One of the greatest Nirmala scholars was Gulab Singh (Born 1732) who had written a number of books in Sanskrit, Hindi and Punjabi. According to Bhai Kahn Singh, he had been victim of the fury of fanatical Brahmins who out of jealousy with him destroyed several of his works because they considered him low caste. Gulab Singh belonged to Rai family of Lahore District. Other prominent persons of this order were Sant Nikka Singh and Pandit Tara Singh Narotam of Patiala. Thus Nirmalas have been representing one facet of the personality of the Guru who created Khalsa whose tercentenary we are celebrating.

Sewa Panthis Service to Mankind

Another aspect of Guru's teaching was his universal love for all humanity. He had stated.

"The Hindus and the Muslims are all one
Have each the habit of different environments.
All men have the same eyes, the same body.
The same form compounded of the same four elements.
Earth, air, fire and water
The *Abhekh* (formless) of the Hindus the Allah of the Muslims)
The Koran and the Purans praise the same Lord
They are all one in spirit
The one Lord made them all" (Akal Ustat 86)

This aspect of universal love has been represented by the *Sewa Panthis*. The founder of Sewa Panthis was Bhai Bhai Kanya. He belonged to Sodra District Gujranwala and was Dhaman Khatri by caste. During the days of Guru Tegh Bahadur he used to carry water for the Guru's kitchen. During the battles of Anandpur in early eighteen century, he used to serve the wounded soldiers in the battlefield. One day one Sikh complained to the Guru against him that he was supplying water to wounded soldiers of the enemy. When called upon to explain his conduct he explained that he could not discriminate against the enemy as all were the creation of same God. Thus Bhai Kanya carried the duties of modern Red Cross and the Guru blessed his efforts, gave him medicine and other facilities to serve the wounded without making discrimination. After Bhai Kanya the work of social service was taken up by a number of his successors. Among his successors the most prominent were Addan Shah and Sewa Ram. This missionary order is known for social service. But occasionally some members took to literary work also.

Respect for women

Guru Gobind Singh taught the Khalsa highest moral and ethical values. In the Muslim contemporary world every Muslim conquest was always accompanied by the number of slaves. Women captured were taken by the soldiers who could sell them in open market. The beautiful women were offered to the officers and even Khalifas have accepted such gifts according to the Muslim chroniclers.

But Guru Gobind Singh did not follow this practice. Once during the war, the Sikhs captured one beautiful Muslim woman. The Sikhs wanted to treat the women in the same way as the Muslims had been treating the Hindu woman folk for eight hundred years. But the Guru did not allow the Sikhs to show any disrespect to the woman and consequently she was restored to her family. How the Guru argued with the Sikhs to keep aloof from adultery has been recorded by Bhai Santokh Singh in the Suraj Parkash:

"The Sikh argued with the Guru that the Muslims carried the Hindu women. The Sikhs wanted to pay the Muslims in their own coins. Then why such a thing should be forbidden". The Guru then replied, "I want to take the Panth to the highest level and will not allow it to fall to the depth of hell. Such an immoral conduct has, therefore, been forbidden."

The respect of women especially of Muslim ones, captured during the war, became a special feature of the Khalsa. In the Sikh code of conduct, marrying a Muslim woman was considered a sin. It was this code of conduct which was responsible for the high character of Sikh *Misaldars* during the eighteen century. Qazi Nur Mohammad who accompanied Ahmad Shah Abdali during his seventh invasion in 1764 A.D. has given an eye witness account of the Sikhs. He calls the Sikhs 'Sag' which means 'dog' and enjoys this pun on Persian as his expedition was meant to exterminate the Sikhs. But he has paid glowing tributes to the Sikh character when he says:

"Leaving aside their mode of fighting, hear you another point in which they excel all other fighting people:

In no case would they slay a coward or put any obstacle in the way of the fugitive. They do not plunder the wealth and ornaments of a woman, be she a well to do lady or a maid servant. There is no adultery amongst these dogs, nor are these mischievous people given to thieving.

Whether the woman is young or old, they call her *Budhiya*, an

old lady, and ask her to get out of the way. The word *budhiya* in Indian language means "an old lady".

There is no thief at all among these dogs, nor there is any house breaker born among these miscreants. Because they do not make friends with adulterers and house breakers."

High Moral Character

The moral character of the Sikh chiefs during eighteen century shines like a beacon light seen against the depravity, rape and plunder so frequently indulged in by both Mughal and Afghan rulers. Sir J N Sarkar writes that Alamgir II verging on the age of sixty, shamelessly demanded for marriage, the hand of Hazrat Begum sixteen years old daughter of Mohammad Shah. Ahmed Shah Abdali who was of grand fatherly age forcibly took her into his *harem* (*Fall of Mughal Empire*, vol II, page 103). The Marathi news letters preserved in the Selection From Peshwa Daftar XXI, 104 records "wherever handsome Hindu women were reported, Abdali sent his men who brought them to his quarters". In that age of moral laxity, the character of the Sikhs was merely exemplary. Once incident which has been frequently occurs in the Patiala record and has been given in my book "*Maharaja Ala Singh and His Times*" on page 147 is quoted here to give an idea of the Sikh character in those days.

"Once Baba Ala Singh went up on the roof of his house at Longowal and there accidentally he saw a young naked girl who was taking her bath on the roof of her house. Shutting his eyes he came down stairs. He called her father and having told him the whole account - apologised. Not only this, Maharaja Ala Singh considering the girl as his own daughter defrayed the expenses of her marriage."

According to Rattan Singh Bhango, the author of immortal *Panth Parkash* page 377 the Sikhs led their first expedition to Kasur in 1760 at the request of a Brahmin whose wife had been carried away by the Nawab of Kasur. The Brahmin presented his petition to the Khalsa just after Bisakhi when various *Misaldars* had assembled at Darbar Sahib, Amritsar. The Brahmin had appealed the Khalsa in such a way that an expedition was led to Kasur. Kasur was conquered and the wife of the Brahmin was recovered and restored to her husband.

Such high character displayed by the Sikhs was due to Guru Gobind Singh's teachings which have been fully reflected in the history of Khalsa.

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The Other's Eye

In the character of this reformer (Guru Gobind Singh) of Sikhs, it is impossible not to recognise many of those features which have distinguished the most celebrated founders of political communities. The object he attempted was great and laudable. It was the emancipation of his tribe from oppression and persecution, and the means which he adopted, were such as a comprehensive mind could alone have suggested.

—Malcolm
Sketch of the Sikhs

Success is thus not always the measure of greatness. The last apostle of the Sikhs did not have to see his own ends accomplished but he effectively aroused the dormant energies of a vanquished people and filled them with a lofty although fitful longing for a social freedom and national ascendancy, the proper adjustments of that purity of worship which had been preached by Nanak, Gobind and what was yet vital and he relumed it with Promethean fire. A living spirit possesses the whole Sikh people and the impress of Gobind has not only elevated and altered the constitution of their minds, but has operated materially and given amplitude to their physical frames.

—Joseph Davey Cunningham
History of Sikhs

Historians agree in eulogizing the great merits of Guru Gobind Singh. In him were united the qualities of a religious leader and a warrior. He was a law giver in the pulpit, a champion in the field, a king on his *masnad* and a *faqir* in the society of Khalsa. He was the right man for the needs of the times.

—Syad Muhammad Latif
History of the Punjab

But that as it may, it is undeniable that Guru Gobind Singh must be counted among the greatest of Indians of all ages.... To an atmosphere of gloom and utter degradation he brought a message of hope and deliverance, and a will to do and die. He not only brought into being a moral force of an intensely dynamic character but was careful to harness to it as much of material assistance as he possibly could. He was a saint as well as a soldier. As he himself said, he bore no enmity to any one but he was the eternal enemy of tyranny and oppression whatever might be their brand or form. He had declared on them a never ending war and created the Khalsa to carry it on.

– Dr Indu Bhushan Bannerjee
Evolution of Khalsa, vol. II

